

The Gospel According to Luke
Luke 18:31-43

Sermon #79
May 24, 2020

Parallel Passages: Matthew 20:17-19, 29-34 and Mark 10:32-34, 46-52
Reading: Mark 10:32-34 and 46 to 52

God's Glory Revealed

The Gospel of Luke is put together in such a way that the narrative of Jesus' travels and teachings are full of theology. Often the theology comes forth as you look forward and backwards in Luke's gospel account. Here in the last 13 verses of chapter 18 we witness two contrasts.

First, Luke contrasts the blind man in our text today with the rich young ruler from last week. The young ruler was told to sell all he had and give the money to the poor and follow Jesus. Luke records that the young ruler went away sad because he was very wealthy. He could not release his grip on his possessions and follow Christ. He loved his stuff, his money and his status more than he loved God and His only begotten Son, Jesus. In today's passage, in contrast, we have a blind beggar who was at the very bottom of the social ladder. He had nothing and had no claim to any social status. He was extremely poor or the opposite of the extremely rich young ruler. He had nothing to sell and give to the poor, for he was poor himself. I would like you to take notice as we read our text today that this poor beggar upon entering the Kingdom of God through salvation immediately began to follow Jesus. The young ruler was sad and rejected by the command to follow Jesus, yet, for this beggar he was delighted to follow Jesus and glorify God.

The second contrast is between the blindness of the disciples and the insight of the blind man. It is somewhat ironic this physically blind man had a greater insight into the mission of Jesus than His followers, even the inner circle of his

disciples. So, as we read the Scriptures today, I hope you will observe these connections not only within Luke but with the other gospel accounts as well. As one studies the Word of God it is important to go to parallel passages and make connections. For the whole of the Bible builds the all-inclusive truth God gives to His creation, to his beloved children He has called.

Pray

As Jesus said of the Scriptures and the truth of God, “For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light.”²³ If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.” (Mark 4:22-23) Now let me read the Word of God and may its truth change us, may we have ears to hear. Reading beginning at Luke 18 verse 31. “Taking the twelve, *Jesus* said to them, ‘See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished.’³² For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon.³³ And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise.’³⁴ But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.”

³⁵ “As *Jesus* drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging.³⁶ And hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what this meant.³⁷ They told him, ‘Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.’³⁸ And *blind man* cried out, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’³⁹ And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’⁴⁰ And *Jesus* stopped and commanded him to be brought to him. And when he came near, *Jesus* asked him,⁴¹ ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ *The blind man* said, ‘Lord, let me recover my sight.’⁴² And *Jesus* said to him, ‘Recover your sight; your faith has made you well.’⁴³ And immediately he recovered his sight and

followed *Jesus*, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.” (ESV) This is the Word of God to His people. Amen!

Blind to God’s Glory (v. 31-34)

Luke has given us a travel log of Jesus’ journey toward Jerusalem and it is approaching its final stage. Jesus says to his disciples in verse 31, “**See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished.**” When Jesus referred to himself as the “**Son of Man**” he is speaking of Daniel’s vision, given by God, of the Messiah in chapter 7. Jesus’ focus here is He must get to Jerusalem if the Scriptures are to be fulfilled and from our vantage point of history, we know that both Satan and men will try to derail Jesus, but nothing can stop the plans of God.

Jesus is focused on His mission and reaching Jerusalem. Why is Jerusalem so important? What will happen in Jerusalem? These must have been the questions and the topic of much discussion the disciples were asking and contemplating. Our Lord Jesus knew exactly what awaited Him in Jerusalem and He knew His Father’s plan and that the prophecies would be fulfilled.

The prophecies concerning the Messiah given by God to His chosen prophets, in general, fall into 2 categories. The first are the prophecies of the Messiah’s greatness and majesty. One example is found in the 2nd Psalm, beginning in verse 7, God speaks to King David concerning the Messiah, and David writes, “**I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, ‘You are my Son; today I have begotten you.**”⁸ **Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.**”⁹ **You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.’** King David concludes with advice to rulers of earth¹⁰ **Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the**

earth. ¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. ¹² Kiss the Son of God, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.”

The second category of prophecies are concerned with the Messiah’s suffering and humiliation. For an example of this, I go to Psalm 22. Here King David writes over 1000 prior to Jesus’ birth what God has revealed about Jesus’ suffering, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Jesus says these very words at the cross in Matthew and Mark. Continuing “Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?” Remember Jesus’ prayer that night in the garden. Verse 2, “O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest. ³ Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. ⁴ In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. ⁵ To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.” Jesus understood His mission and even though he would be shamed by men, in the end, both God the Father and God the Son would be glorified.

God said His Son would be treated horribly by men, David continues in verse 6 from Jesus’ perspective, “But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people. ⁷ All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; Jesus is God and knows the plan of salvation He must carry out, continuing in verse 8, “He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!” Jesus speaks to God His Father, ⁹ “Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother’s breasts. ¹⁰ On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother’s womb you have been my God. ¹¹ Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help.” Jesus knows the hearts of men and they will fail. As the God-man Jesus’ trusted is in His Father alone. Jesus foresees, ¹² “Many bulls encompass me; strong

bulls of Bashan (baw·shawn) surround me; ¹³ they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion.” Jesus will be opposed by strong men who desire his death. As verse 16 continues, these men are like “dogs encompass me; here we read of Jesus’ crucifixion, a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet— ¹⁷ I can count all my bones— they stare and gloat over me; ¹⁸ they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.”

All of the suffering Messiah prophecies have been fulfilled and some of the reigning ones also. But the disciples were confused how both the suffering and the reigning prophecies could be true. They did not understand Jesus would endure suffering first and then He would be exalted. Unless they understood the suffering and the dying prophecies, they would never understand the resurrection and reigning prophecies. They did not understand at this point in time, but understanding would come. For people throughout history since Christ’s resurrection, if they do not believe the resurrection of Jesus the Bible becomes impossible to understand.

What was so far removed from the disciples understanding was the great reversal that Luke shows. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, who is infinitely more exalted than anyone else, would assume the lowest possible role. Jesus would take on the position of a humiliated lowly criminal on a cross. He would be crucified. He would die the death that sinners should have endured. Why? Why would Jesus do this? To fulfill the eternal plan of God and so that, the lowly, the humble and broken sinners of this world would be exalted through His atoning sacrifice. He left heaven and came to earth so we could escape the snare of sin and be with Him in heaven. He took our place so we can be with Him forever.

At this time the disciples had too many delusions of grandeur to ever consider that Jesus came to earth to die for sinners. They were too busy jockeying for position in this new kingdom to even consider Jesus had to suffer and die for mankind's salvation.

On the part of our Lord, we must realize that He is getting closer and closer to His suffering and death. He knows what will happen when the road ends in Jerusalem. He knows and is embracing God's will for Him; even if God the Father's will is for Him to die. How far will Jesus go to rescue His beloved people from sin and glorify His Father? There is no cost too great, He is fully committed.

While Jesus knew what each and every step would bring, His disciples did not have a hint of an idea what was about to happen at this juncture. This would be the third time Jesus would tell them of His eventual suffering and resurrection and still they did not understand. They did not understand because their minds were filled with what they perceived as their future power and fame by being the inner circle of Jesus' followers. This blinded them to the reality Jesus continues sharing and teaching. Before we become too critical of these disciples, we need to understand that it was God that kept them from understanding. Luke tells us in verse 34 concerning Jesus' disciples, ³⁴“they understood none of these things Jesus had just told them. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.” This is very similar to an earlier account in Luke chapter 9 where Jesus told the disciples the future of how He was to die. “But while the *disciples* were all marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, ⁴⁴‘Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.’ ⁴⁵ But the *disciples* did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying.” (Luke 9:43-45)

So again, in this passage, it tells us that the disciples were not dull in understanding. In fact, later it would be these men who would write much of the New Testament and give their lives as a testimony to Jesus' deity. They were kept from understanding. God did not want them to understand at this time. It was vital for them to hear these words but it would be for the glory of God that they would on a later date understand these words. There would, however, come a day in which it would become crystal clear and they would remember their Master's Words and their faith would be made even stronger. But for now, it was not the right time.

It looks as if that the key to their understanding was the resurrection. When they saw the risen Lord, everything became clear and all He had said made sense. Their lack of understanding concerning the resurrection was the roadblock in their current understanding of what Jesus was telling them. The disciples' blindness had to do, at least in part, to their rejection of the resurrection. With Jesus' resurrection they moved from disciples to apostles. God's sovereignty and power over men even works at the level of the mind. God allows us to understand things when the time is right and withholds other things when the time is not right.

God's eternal plan has Jesus' glory at its heart; the glory of giving mankind salvation. Jesus must get to the cross exactly at the right time. Part of this timing had to do with the disciple's lack of understanding; they were blind to some truths up to the point of the resurrection. As these truths were revealed it brought glory to God the Father and the Son. While their spiritually limited sight accomplished God's purposes it was time for a blind man to see spiritually.

Seeing God's Glory (v. 35-39)

Just as the Lord spiritually blinded the disciples to understanding His truths, He miraculously gave spiritual sight to a blind beggar. Reading at verse 35, “*As Jesus drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging.*”³⁶ And hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what this meant.³⁷ They told him, ‘Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.’³⁸ And *blind man* cried out, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’³⁹ And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’” It is interesting that God gave dullness of mind to some and spiritual insight to others, but I know He did this because it served His eternal plan to bring salvation to His children. Does this not given you pause, as you realize He chose you from the crowd, as He did the blind man, to give you spiritual life that you may be called His child?

The blind man hears the commotion of a large crowd passing and inquires, what is going on. Someone tells the blind beggar Jesus of Nazareth is here. The title “*Jesus of Nazareth*” was not a title of honor. It was a title of insult and turmoil. It was a title to show dishonor to Jesus. Remember Philip told Nathanael,⁴⁵ “‘*We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*’”⁴⁶ Nathanael said to *Philip*, ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’” (John 1:45-46) So, whomever informed the physically blind man by using this demeaning title for Jesus; it did not deter the beggar for God had allowed him to see spiritually who Jesus was. So, this blind beggar cries out from the depth of his heart “*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!*” The people who had just told him it was “*Jesus of Nazareth*” were shocked that he did not understand Jesus was someone stirring up the crowd to cause a commotion and certainly was not the foretold “*Son of David*”. The title “*Son of*

David” is Messianic. The Scripture does not tell us that this blind man expected Jesus to heal him, but his declaration that Jesus was the Messiah, meant he knew as the “Son of David”, as the Son of God, Jesus could do anything. So, this blind man would not be silenced by the unbelievers, the naysayers and a second time, even louder he cries out to Jesus, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” Is this how your belief in Jesus as God is? Is it you cannot help crying out to all who will hear “Jesus, Son of David had mercy on me and saved me and made be a child of God!” Do you have faith as the world around you remains blind and tells you to be silent? Let me remind you of what Jesus said after the parable of the unjust judge and the widow earlier in chapter 18, ⁷“will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? ⁸ I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” The tax collector in the temple, knew he was an unworthy sinner and cried out for mercy, it says, he “would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’” (v. 13) Here is one who knew who Jesus was and this blind man knew he was an unworthy sinner and when people wanted to silence him, “he cried out all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’” Nothing would stop him from declaring Jesus as God and God the righteous judge vindicated this man and as in verse 8 for the widow where Jesus declared, God “will give justice to them speedily”, Jesus did exactly as He said He would do. This man cried to God for mercy and mercy was given.

Living for God’s Glory (v. 40-43)

The blind man who cannot see the face of Jesus, yet, cries out the title of the Messiah, “Son of David”. Most in the crowd did not see Jesus as He was, the Messiah, but this man saw with the spiritual sight given by God. Hearing this, we read in verse 40, “Jesus stopped and commanded *this blind man to be brought to*

him. And when he came near, *Jesus* asked him, ⁴¹ ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ *The blind man* said, ‘Lord, let me recover my sight.’ ⁴² And *Jesus* said to him, ‘Recover your sight; your faith has made you well.’ ⁴³ And immediately he recovered his sight and followed *Jesus*, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.” It is interesting that this is the last recorded healing before *Jesus* suffers the cross. Since this is the last healing what should we learn from it? What does this tell us about the healing ministry of *Jesus*? How does this healing relate to all the healings *Jesus* did that bore testimony to His Godship? What did *Jesus* want the crowd to see and understand?

All the prior miracles *Jesus* worked in the sight of many people pointed to what it will be like in the Kingdom of God. He healed disease and handicaps because in the Kingdom of God there will be no sickness. He raised people from the dead because in the Kingdom of God there will be no death. He ministered to the poor because in the Kingdom of God there will be no poverty. He also did these things because the Old Testament prophecies predicted the One who carried these miracles out would be the “*Son of David*”, the Messiah, the Son of God.

Many physically miraculous blessings came to mankind through *Jesus Christ*, but these were meant to validate *Jesus* as the Messiah, the Son of God and point mankind to their need salvation, which comes through *Christ* alone and this was the greatest blessing of all. I take us back to the first chapter of *Luke* beginning in verse 30, “the angel said to *Mary*, ‘Do not be afraid, *Mary*, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name *Jesus*. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father *David*, ³³ and he will reign over the house of *Jacob* forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” In response *Mary* sings a song of praise, she is a

young woman of only 14 to 15 years old, who has heard the Old Testament read in synagogue but she is certainly not a student of the Scriptures. Miraculously, her song uses the words of Hannah, the mother of Samuel. Hannah was barren and prayed contentiously for a child and God gave her Israel's last judge. Her prayer is found in 1 Samuel chapter 2. Reading from Luke 1, at verse 46, "Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord,⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,⁴⁸ for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;⁴⁹ for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.⁵⁰ And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;⁵² he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate ...'" So, it was prophesied that Jesus would bring down the "mighty from their thrones" and history shows us it is so. Further, Jesus would exalt "those of humble estate", just like the blind man before Him as He journeyed towards Jerusalem.

Earlier in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 4, Jesus entered the synagogue to officially begin His public ministry, remember what He proclaimed of Himself? It says beginning in verse 17, "the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, *in chapter 61,*¹⁸ 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to **proclaim good news to the poor.** He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and **recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,**¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.'²⁰ And Jesus rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.²¹ And he began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'" Part of the prophecy found in Isaiah 61 concerning the Messiah was that

Jesus would “**give sight to the blind**” and “**set at liberty those who are oppressed**” and proclaim the good news or the “**Lord’s favor**” meaning God forgives repentant sinners. That is exactly what Jesus the Messiah, the Son of David or God who came to earth as a man for; the salvation of repentant sinners. It is exactly what Jesus does here in Luke chapter 18.

Our Lord is on His way to the cross and stops at the shouts of a poor blind beggar. He orders those from the crowd to bring him over. So, the very people who were rebuking this man, for shouting the Davidic title in reference to Jesus, these people who felt they were superior to this poor blind man get to carry him over to meet the Son of David.

What did this man want from Jesus? Was it alms? No. Was it to settle some dispute? No. Jesus already knew what the man wanted. Jesus already knew He would heal this blind man but He also wanted him to speak his desire so the crowd would hear him tell what it was that he wanted. Our Lord tenderly receives this man in the midst of the very large crowd. The blind man’s simple response to Jesus question is “I want to see”.

Compared to the disciples, who God kept from spiritually seeing, this man could, in fact, see the spiritual truth. He had been given spiritual insight. He knew who Jesus was and at this point he knew better than Jesus’ followers did. Even though this man had been given the gift of spiritual sight he desired to see physically. So, the Messiah, the One prophesied of in Isaiah, would bring sight to the blind and set at liberty the captives and proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, immediately Jesus gives this man his request as He said He would in Luke 18, verses 7 and 8, “**will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night?**” ⁸ **I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily.”** At that instant, this blind

man was made well or made whole again. He was restored inside and out. His faith in Jesus as the Christ not only restored his sight, it also cleansed his sin. This man became a devoted follower of Christ as verse 43 reveals, “**immediately he recovered his sight and followed Jesus, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.**” This man began to glorify God and the people who witnessed what had been done also glorified God. God received glory that day because a man was blind and Jesus healed him physically and spiritually.

Picture this scene in your mind’s eye, there is blind Bartimaeus (bar·tim·ah·yos) as he is named in Mark’s Gospel, and he is surrounded by a great crowd of people. He is poor, blind, oppressed and discounted by the crowd; first he is given spiritual sight and then physically the first thing he sees is Jesus the Messiah. What a most amazing sight that must have been. By faith he called out to the Son of David, grant me mercy and Jesus who God the Father had “**sent to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,** ¹⁹ **to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.**” does exactly that.

Because the blind man believed wonderful miracles awaited him. He believed so strongly that Jesus was the Son of David that even when everyone around him was trying to silence him - he yelled all the louder. When Jesus asked him what he wanted, he believed Jesus had the power to heal him. Jesus saw in this man saving faith and not only cured his eyesight but welcomed him into God’s Kingdom ⁴³ “**And immediately he followed Jesus, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.**” Like the blind man, by faith, I cry out, Jesus, Son of David have mercy on me and He has. I praise my Lord and Savior! My beloved, may our lives glorify God and may people give praise to God because of our faith. Amen and Amen!